

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9658
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 05951

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UR, FR, PINT
SUBJECT: SOVIET SATISFACTION WITH FRENCH ELECTIONS

SUMMARY: AFTER MONTHS OF SILENCE REGARDING THE RECENT
FRENCH ELECTIONS, SOVIET PRESS COMMENTATORS HAVE FINALLY
ADDRESSED AGAIN THE FRENCH POLITICAL SITUATION IN TWO
LENGTHY ANALYSES MARCH 23 AND 24. COMMENTING ON THE ELEC-
TIONS AND THE POST-ELECTION POLITICAL SITUATION IN FRANCE,
THEY VIEWED THE GOVERNMENT VICTORY WITH EQUANIMITY AND
POINTEDLY REPLAYED GISCARD'S POST-ELECTION REMARKS ABOUT
THE CONTINUITY OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY. THE LEFT GOT
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SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING FOR ITS LOSS, ALBEIT NOT WITHOUT
SOME CRITICISM FOR ITS DIVISIONS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE
LOSS. THE PCF GOT BY RATHER BETTER THAN EXPECTED. PRI-
VATELY SOVIET OFFICIALS ARE EXPRESSING THEIR SATISFACTION
WITH THE RESULTS AND LOOKING FORWARD TO BUSINESS AS USUAL
WITH THE FRENCH IN FOREIGN POLICY, WHILE PREDICTING, NOT
UNHAPPILY, DOMESTIC LABOR TROUBLE AHEAD FOR THE GOF. END

SUMMARY.

1. FOR MONTHS THE SOVIET PRESS AND OFFICIAL SOVIETS IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS HAVE BEEN SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDING ANY COMMENT WHICH WOULD SHOW PARTISANSHIP FOR EITHER THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT IN THE FRENCH ELECTIONS. THE FIRST ROUND RESULTS WERE REPORTED IN THE PRESS BRIEFLY, VERY FACTUALLY (TAKEN STRAIGHT FROM THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF INTERIOR FIGURES WE ARE TOLD BY FRENCH EMBASSY COLLEAGUES) AND, IN A SENSE, ALMOST ANTISEPTICALLY. THERE WERE NO PRE-ELECTION ARTICLES SETTING THE SCENE, NOR WERE THERE ANY REMARKS ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST ROUND RESULTS. THE FIRST BREAK IN THIS WALL OF SILENCE CAME IN TWO STAGES, FIRST IN PRIVATE COMMENTS BY OFFICIAL SOVIETS AND SECOND IN BACK-TO-BACK ARTICLES IN SOCIALIST INDUSTRY AND PRAVDA ON MARCH 23 AND 24. THESE PRESS PIECES WERE CLEARLY DESIGNED TO PROPAGATE THE OFFICIAL LINE ON THE ELECTIONS AND THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH.

2. FRENCH RESIDENT JOURNALISTS IN MOSCOW WERE THE FIRST TO HEAR COMMENTS BY OFFICIAL SOVIET SOURCES DURING THE WEEK BETWEEN THE TWO ROUNDS OF THE ELECTIONS. THEY WERE TOLD OF SATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST ROUND AND OF THE HOPE THAT THE GOVERNING COALITION WOULD CARRY THE DAY IN ROUND TWO. THE SENIOR AFP REPRESENTATIVE AND THE LE MONDE CORRESPONDENT WERE TOLD BETWEEN

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ROUNDS BY SOVIET OFFICIALS AND OTHERS (ONE OF THE OTHERS WAS IDENTIFIED AS VICTOR LOUIS) THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS INTERESTED IN STABILITY IN FRANCE AND CONTINUITY IN FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY, BOTH OF WHICH WOULD PERMIT FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE. BOTH JOURNALISTS WERE TOLD THAT THE SOVIETS WISHED TO SEE A VICTORY BY THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES IN ROUND TWO WITH CHIRAC AND THE GAULLISTS MAINTAINING OR REINFORCING THEIR IMPORTANT POSITION WITHIN THE COALITION. DURING THIS WEEK'S INTERLUDE WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY FRENCH EMBOFFS THAT THE EMBASSY RECEIVED NO INDICATIONS OF ANY SUCH PARTISANSHIP FROM THEIR SOVIET CONTACTS.

3. THE SOVIET PRESS, OF COURSE, WHEN IT FINALLY GOT AROUND TO A COMMENT, WAS MORE CIRCUMSPECT IN ITS ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION AND OF SOVIET DESIRES. NONETHELESS, THE MESSAGE CONTAINED IN THE FIRST TWO COMMENTARIES CLEARLY SHOWS SOVIET SATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS. G. DAD'YANTS WRITING IN MARCH 23 SOCIALIST INDUSTRY GIVES THREE CAUSES FOR THE DEFEAT OF THE LEFT: (A) THE ANTI-COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN OF THE FRENCH MEDIA AND THE

"BOURGEOIS PARTIES" WHICH RAISED THE SPECTER OF A
"TOTALITARIAN REGIME" SHOULD THE LEFT WIN; (B) SPLITS IN
THE LEFT (MOSTLY BLAMED ON THE PS) WHICH RAISED QUESTIONS
ABOUT HOW THE LEFT COULD GOVERN IF IT WERE NOT UNITED;
(C) THE SYSTEM OF VOTING (SINGLE CONSTITUENCY) WHICH
DISTORTED THE RESULTS AND GAVE A LARGE MAJORITY OF SEATS
TO THOSE PARTIES WHICH WERE UNABLE TO GAIN A LARGE
MAJORITY OF THE VOTES. THE LAST REASON WAS LISTED AS
THE MOST IMPORTANT. THROUGHOUT THE LONG ARTICLE THERE
WAS A NOTABLE LACK OF CRITICAL COMMENT OF THE GOVERNING

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COALITION AND NO HINT OF DISSATISFACTION AT THE RESULTS.

4. BOTH DAD'YANTS AND YURIY KHARLANOV IN PRAVDA MARCH
24 GAVE A FAVORABLE BOW IN THE DIRECTION OF THE LEFT
BY CALLING ATTENTION TO "ALMOST HALF THE VOTE"
(KHARLANOV) FOR THE LEFT IN ROUND ONE AND CITING A PCF
POLITBURO STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT IN BOTH THE FIRST
AND SECOND ROUND THE LEFT AND RIGHT RECEIVED

"PRACTICALLY THE SAME NUMBER OF VOTES" (DAD'YANTS).
THE INCREASED STRENGTH OF THE LEFT IS ALSO PART OF THE
REASON FOR KHARLANOV'S CLAIM THAT THE ELECTIONS WERE
"ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IN FRENCH HISTORY" AND THAT,
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REPLAYING A FIGARO REMARK, THINGS CAN "HARDLY BE THE
SAME AS BEFORE" IN FRANCE FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS.

5. AS FOR THE COMMUNISTS, THERE IS NEITHER MUCH GOOD
NOR MUCH CRITICAL SAID OF THEM IN THE TWO PIECES.
MARCHAIS IS MENTIONED BY NAME ONLY IN THE SOCIALIST
INDUSTRY ARTICLE, ALTHOUGH KHARLANOV'S TITLE IN
PRAVDA, "FRANCE: PROBLEMS REMAIN," IS TAKEN FROM A
MARCHAIS PHRASE CITED BY DAD'YANTS. NEITHER AUTHOR
CHOOSES TO EVALUATE THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE PCF
OR THE PS WITHIN THE LEFT OPPOSITION FOLLOWING THE
ELECTION.

6. KHARLANOV AND DAD'YANTS BOTH MAKE IT A MAJOR POINT
TO PREDICT INTERNAL LABOR UNREST IN THE COMING MONTHS
BY MENTIONING TRADE UNION OFFICIALS' REMARKS ABOUT A
"THIRD ROUND" IN THE ELECTIONS WHEN LABOR'S DEMANDS WILL
BE MADE (DAD'YANTS) AND BY EMPHASIZING THAT FULFILLING
THE DEMANDS OF THE WORKERS REMAINS "THE NUMBER ONE TASK"
OF THE LEFT (KHARLANOV) WHICH WILL REQUIRE "UNITY OF
LEFT FORCES."

7. ONLY A BRIEF REFERENCE TO FOREIGN POLICY APPEARS IN
THE PRAVDA PIECE BY KHARLANOV REPEATING FRENCH PRESI-
DENT GISCARD'S RADIO AND TV STATEMENT THAT THE "FOREIGN
POLICY OF FRANCE WILL CONTINUE ON ITS COURSE OF
INDEPENDENCE, SECURITY AND PEACE."

8. COMMENT: THE SOVIETS ARE CLEARLY PLEASED WITH THE
OUTCOME IN SEVERAL WAYS. FIRST, IT INSURES THE GOVERNING
COALITION, WITH WHOM THE SOVIETS ARE COMFORTABLE, OF A
WORKING MAJORITY IN THE PARLIAMENT AND, IN SOVIET EYES,
THE POSSIBILITY TO CONTINUE WITH A BASICALLY GAULLIST
FOREIGN POLICY. SECOND, THE EVIDENT STRENGTH OF THE
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LEFT IN THE POPULAR VOTE ENABLES THEM TO LOOK AT THE
ELECTIONS AS A PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT. TO SOME EXTENT
IT APPEARS THAT THE SOVIETS EXPECT THE POLITICAL ACTION
IN FRANCE TO BE FOCUSED IN THE LABOR UNIONS IN THE
COMING MONTHS, NOT IN THE PARLIAMENT, AND THIS PROSPECT

DOES NOT DISPLEASE THEM, JUDGING FROM THE MANNER OF
PRESENTING THE SITUATION IN BOTH ARTICLES. DAD'YANTS
SEEMS TO SUM UP THE SOVIET ATTITUDE ON THIS POINT IN
HIS CONCLUDING SENTENCE IN WHICH HE QUOTES MITTERAND
THAT "THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IS RIGHTIST, BUT THE
MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLE ARE LEFTIST." WHETHER ACCURATE
OR NOT THIS IS PROBABLY HOW THE SOVIETS SEE IT, AND
WOULD LIKE THINGS TO REMAIN FOR NOW. TOON

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